In the Claims

Please cancel Claims 29-52 without prejudice or disclaimer as to the subject matter recited therein.

1. (Original) A method of passing configuration information between a DHCP server and a DHCP client, the method comprising:

forming a DHCP message having a vendor-specific portion including at least one parameter representing configuration information encoded as a triplet comprising a code field, a length field, and a value field, wherein said code field includes an indication of encryption of the value field, and said value field comprises a set of one or more name-value pairs encrypted in accordance with the code field; and

transmitting the DHCP message including the vendor-specific portion from the DHCP server to the DHCP client.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the value field of said triplet comprises a single name-value pair.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the code field is used to define the form of encryption of the value field.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the code field is used to identify the encryption algorithm used for the value field.

5. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the code field is used to identify the key length used in the encryption of the value field.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one parameter included within the vendor specific portion is encrypted, and at least one other parameter included within the vendor specific portion is not encrypted.

7. (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one parameter is not formally defined within DHCP.

8. (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein said encryption is performed using a key specific to the DHCP client.

9. (Original)   The method of claim 8, further comprising the client initially transmitting said specific key to the DHCP server.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising storing said at least one parameter in a repository on the DHCP server.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, further comprising:

    editing said at least one parameter on a DHCP client; and

    writing the edited at least one parameter from the DHCP client into the repository for storage on the DHCP server.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, further comprising replicating the stored at least one parameter in the repository on the DHCP server for use by one or more other DHCP clients.

13. (Original) A dynamic host configuration protocol (DHCP) server comprising:

    a store containing DHCP information for at least one DHCP client, said DHCP information including a vendor-specific portion containing at least one parameter representing configuration information for the DHCP client encoded within a triplet comprising a code field, a length field, and a value field, wherein said code field includes an indication of encryption of the value field, and said value field comprises a set of one or more name-value pairs encrypted in accordance with the code field; and

    a network interface operable to transmit a DHCP message including the vendor-specific portion to the DHCP client.

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the value field of said triplet comprises a single name-value pair.

15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the code field is used to define the form of encryption of the value field.

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the code field is used to identify the encryption algorithm used for the value field.

17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the code field is used to identify the key length used in the encryption of the value field.

18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein at least one parameter included within the vendor specific portion is encrypted, and at least one other parameter included within the vendor specific portion is not encrypted.

19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein said at least one parameter is not formally defined within DHCP.

20. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein said encryption is performed using a key specific to the DHCP client.

21. (Original) The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the specific key is initially received from the DHCP client via said network interface.

22. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein said store comprises a repository on the DHCP server.

23. (Original) The apparatus of claim 22, wherein said network interface is operable to receive an edited version of said at least one parameter from the DHCP client and to write the edited at least one parameter from the DHCP client into the repository.

24. (Original) The apparatus of claim 23, wherein the stored at least one parameter in the repository may be replicated on the DHCP server for use by other DHCP clients.

25. (Original) A computer program product comprising program instructions on a medium, wherein said instructions when executed by a machine cause the machine to:

form a DHCP message having a vendor-specific portion including at least one parameter representing configuration information encoded within a triplet comprising a code field, a length field, and a value field, wherein said code field includes an indication of encryption of the value field, and said value field comprises a set of one or more name-value pairs encrypted in accordance with the code field; and

transmit the DHCP message including the vendor-specific portion from the DHCP server to the DHCP client.

26. (Original) A method of managing a DHCP server having a repository of DHCP client configuration data, the method comprising:

receiving vendor-specific data representing configuration data for said client, wherein said vendor-specific data comprises at least one triplet of a code field, a length field, and a value field, wherein said code field includes an indication of encryption of the value field, and said value field comprises a set of one or more name-value pairs encrypted in accordance with the code field; and

storing in the repository the received vendor-specific configuration data for the client.

27. (Original) A method of providing configuration information from a server to a client, the method comprising:

forming a message containing a vendor-specific portion including:

at least one parameter representing configuration information encoded as a name-value pairs, wherein the name-value pair is encrypted; and

a code segment descriptive of the encryption applied to said name-value pair; and

transmitting the message including the vendor-specific portion from the server to the client.

28. (Original) Means for passing configuration information between a DHCP server and a DHCP client comprising:

means for forming a DHCP message having a vendor-specific portion including at least one parameter representing configuration information encoded within a triplet comprising a code field, a length field, and a value field, wherein said code field includes an indication of encryption of the value field, and said value field comprises a set of one or more name-value pairs encrypted in accordance with the code field; and

means for transmitting the DHCP message including the vendor-specific portion from the DHCP server to the DHCP client.

29-52. (Cancelled)